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Talking Points for the DCI on Lebanon
(8 September 1983)

Political Trend

President Gemayel's political position will deteriorate as long as the fighting continues. Both the Christian Lebanese Forces and the Muslim and Druze opposition have hardened their demands, and Gemayel cannot move to placate one side without pushing the other toward open revolt. Gemayel almost certainly cannot hang on indefinitely in this situation. []

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The Lebanese Forces, reeling from their defeats in the Alayh-Shuf region, are demanding that the Lebanese Army move in force to protect Christian villages.

- The Lebanese Forces also want Gemayel to strike a political deal with Israel in the hope that Israel will intervene on their behalf. []

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Muslims and Druze already view the tentative Army moves into the region as blatantly pro-Christian.

- Nabih Barri and Walid Junblatt essentially want Gemayel to relinquish Christian political dominance and give the non-Christian majority a more equitable share of power.
- If Gemayel makes such concessions he will risk his life--the Lebanese Forces probably would attempt a coup or an assassination. []

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The Saudi ceasefire plan apparently demands significant concessions from the Gemayel government, including the withdrawal of Lebanese Army units from many of their positions in West Beirut and the Shuf region.

- Neither Gemayel nor the Lebanese Forces, who fear Druze massacres of Christian villagers in the Shuf, are likely to agree to a plan that leaves Druze gains in the region intact.

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Military Developments

The Lebanese Army has undertaken a limited offensive in the mountains southeast of Beirut in an effort to block Druze advances on the city.

- The LAF today also began advancing from Suq al Gharb toward Qabr Shamun, a Druze town guarding a key road junction.

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- [REDACTED]
- The LAF, however, is limited in its capabilities because of the potential for renewed fighting in Beirut [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

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Despite the Army's weakness, its recent moves have caused concern among the Druze, who are now threatening to shell the largely Christian population of Suq al Gharb and Dayr al Qamar.

- Druze leader Junblatt has said he can bear no responsibility for the safety of the population of Dayr al Qamar--swollen by an estimated 40,000 refugees--which Druze forces are now shelling, unless the Army ceases its advance. [REDACTED]

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Since Monday, the Druze have driven west toward Beirut and south toward the Awwali River in an effort to subdue all Christian resistance in traditional Druze areas.

- Junblatt probably hopes to wring concessions from the Lebanese Government by threatening Beirut and by holding some Christian population centers hostage.
- Junblatt may also hope to drive most Christians from the area, thereby laying the groundwork for a homogeneous Druze canton or ministate. [REDACTED]

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The greatest fear of both Christians and Druze is that fighters of the other side will massacre their civilian populations, an eventuality that would reduce further the chances of reconciliation between Junblatt and the Lebanese Government.

[REDACTED]

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